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Ex-employee attacks secret CIA operations

by Mike Thurman

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Former CIA agent John Stockwell described the CIA as a "rogue elephant" leading the government where it wants to go around the world and compared reports of escalating U.S. involvement in Central America to his experiences as Angola Task Force commander under the National Security Council during the Angolan crisis.

"It smells so much like Angola," Stockwell said to more than 100 people at the Center for Educational Research and Study (CERAS).

Stockwell worked for ten years on African operations and for three years in Vietnam, immediately following the withdrawal of most American troops in 1973. Throughout his career with the agency, Stockwell became increasingly alarmed at the nature of CIA operations.

"The secrecy," Stockwell said, "is designed to prevent Americans from knowing what the CIA is doing."

"I could see too many cases that the CIA had done what it had wanted to do, then set up the president and lied to him," he said.

Stockwell claimed that CIA-directed actions have resulted in the deaths of 800,000 people around the world, including 500,000 casualties from the Vietnam war and 300,000 deaths resulting from other operations as cited in a Senate Foreign Re-

lations Committee report.

"How many people are we willing to kill in El Salvador, Nicaragua or any of the rest of these places?" Stockwell asked. "At what point do you lose your moral leadership of the world?"

In Angola, Stockwell said the CIA covertly fought a war against Soviet-backed and Cuban regular forces while American leaders openly deplored any form of violence or intervention by other countries.

"We were fighting it secretly with the CIA," Stockwell said.

"We lied extensively throughout this program," he continued, "and we were shackled by those lies. We lied to the president and we lied to the Senate Oversight Committee about what we were doing."

Disillusioned by the nature and mentality of CIA operations, Stockwell left the agency in 1977 to write *In Search of Enemies*, a book describing covert actions conducted by the CIA in Angola.

In 1978, the federal government sued Stockwell, winning an injunction that requires that he submit for review any publication discussing the agency.